

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the Specification on Page 4 by amending the paragraph in lines 4 to 17 to read as follows:

--During further cooling, the hydrogen in the voids substantially prevents the oxygen, which is likewise in a supersaturated concentration, from being able to oxidize the internal surfaces of the voids. Therefore, there is no layer of oxide formed, which otherwise is a significant factor in delaying the elimination of the voids by the heat treatment of the semiconductor wafer obtained from the silicon single crystal. A heat treatment of the semiconductor wafer may be at a temperature of approximately 1200°C and for a period of 60 min in an atmosphere which must contain at most only 3% hydrogen. This heat treatment is therefore sufficient to eliminate the vacancy defects in the region of the semiconductor material in which electronic components are provided.--

Please amend the Specification on Pages 4 and 5, by amending the paragraph bridging Pages 4 to 5 to read as follows:

--In those cases in which the semiconductor wafer must in any case be exposed to the conditions outlined during the production of the components, it is desirable to dispense with

the heat treatment of the semiconductor wafer. In other cases, according to the invention a tempering step is to be carried out. For the tempering step, a heat treatment of the semiconductor wafer in a hydrogen-and argon-containing atmosphere is preferred, and a heat treatment in an atmosphere which contains 97% argon and 3% hydrogen is particularly preferred. The percent of argon and hydrogen is by volume based upon the total volume of the gaseous atmosphere. It is also possible to subject the semiconductor wafer to a heat treatment in an atmosphere which contains less than 3% by volume of hydrogen and the balance substantially being argon.--